



KAREN L. SMITH, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

September 24, 2016

Familial Hypercholesterolemia is one of the most common genetic conditions, causing high levels of Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ("bad cholesterol") and an increased risk for early and aggressive cardiovascular disease. It is estimated that 1.3 million people have Familial Hypercholesterolemia in the United States, but less than ten percent of these people have been diagnosed, making them at-risk for early heart attacks.

Familial Hypercholesterolemia can be identified with a family history of cardiovascular disease and a blood cholesterol screening, and confirmed with DNA testing. Cholesterol screening is recommended for children between the ages of two and eight with a family history of high cholesterol or early onset cardiovascular disease; for all children between the ages of 9 and 11; for all young adults between the ages of 17 and 21; and for all adults every five years. The parents, siblings, and children of a person diagnosed with Familial Hypercholesterolemia have a 50 percent chance of also having the disease and should be screened.

Through the California Wellness Plan Implementation, the California Department of Public Health aims to increase cholesterol screening, decrease the prevalence of high cholesterol, and increase the percentage of those diagnosed with high cholesterol who are managing the condition. Early treatment with cholesterol-lowering medications in individuals with Familial Hypercholesterolemia can greatly reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.

On this day, we raise awareness of Familial Hypercholesterolemia and encourage all residents to learn about their family's heart health history and know their blood cholesterol level.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

